



WISHBONE ASH (l to r) MARTIN TURNER, STEVE UPTON, TED TURNER and ANDY POWELL. They'd be happy to have a hit single, but albums, and they've almost completed recording their second, come first.

The day we feel satisfied will be the day we give up, say Wishbone

IN AN INTERVIEW WITH JAMES JOHNSON

IN the last year Wishbone Ash have been getting increasingly good receptions around the country and making many influential friends, including John Peel, in the music world. But they realise it is their album — now standing at No 30 in the NME chart — that has consolidated their success.

It has also prompted MCA to issue one of the tracks, "Blind Eye," as a single, even though they are not deperately seeking a hit. "We've got nothing against the singles market," said Andy Powell, one of the group's two guitarists, "but quite honestly we are more interested in the album. 'Blind Eye' was released as a trailer which we hope will give us some exposure on radio."

"Sometimes I think singles can almost be a misrepresentation of a group's abilities," added drummer Steve Upton, "because there is so much more you can put across in an album."

Although the future looks extremely bright they feel that there is a long way for the group to go yet. There is no room for complacency. "Let's face it," said Steve, "the moment we sit down and feel satisfied with ourselves is the moment when we might as well give up."

"Yes, I agree," said Andy. "Martin our bass-player always says he wants Wishbone Ash to become a pop group; that is one that is popular. After all in the old days groups would just form up and try and give good value and play good music without having labels attached to them. Personally," he continued, "I just want Wishbone Ash to become one of the most professional, hard-working groups of all time. What we aim at is perfection."

Every move since their formation has been thought out with this aim in mind. After every show their dressing room is the scene of a verbal battle as the group iron out what minor details went wrong in their performance.

Two guitarists

Consequently on stage they are a tight, together band led by Andy and Ted Turner (no relation to bassist Martin Turner) whose two guitars blend almost like a brass section before they break off into their own devious directions.

"When we first started," said Steve, "we had thought along the lines of organ, bass, guitar and drums. Then Andy came along and we thought up the idea of using two guitars in harmony. Since then everything seems to have clicked really well. Of course it was hard at the beginning; it is for most bands," he continued.

"We would go and play anywhere and everywhere for free just to get the feel of playing together. But it's paying off now. We are drawing crowds, and I think we are beginning to get near a sound of our own. But any success we have had is due to one thing and that is solid hard work."

"Probably our weakest point is vocals," said Andy. "At the moment we are more of an instrumental band but we are spending more time on vocals practising harmonies and so on."

"Generally I think the accent is on heavy music," said Steve, "but we are very aware of other influences and we are always experimenting. We've never tried to narrow our musical field. For instance our next album,

which we've almost finished writing, will be lighter with more of a jazz influence." The group have now left for a six week tour of the States after playing their last British date at a packed and excited Roundhouse on Sunday. "I personally think the American tour can do us nothing but good," said Andy. "We haven't played many big concerts over here and if what I hear about America is correct we will be playing in front of much bigger audiences which will be good experience."

"Really, touring America is a challenge and a chance to see another part of the world. The only thing that frightens me is the groupies," he laughed.

In fact the tour is a particularly rigorous one, covering every corner of the country. But they accept the fact that if they are to gain recognition they will have to work hard.

"I suppose it's like any job," said Steve, "you want to be rewarded. Primarily we would put recognition before financial success but then there is also an element of personal achievement."

Hell of a time

"Quite honestly I never really thought I would ever make it in a group but I've stuck at it a hell of a long time and it would be nice to get something in return."

"After all being in a group is my occupation," he continued, "and I take it seriously. Personal achievement is important."

"Actually, I think there's a kind of ego thing about being in a group anyway," said Andy. "I think you got to have some special trait in your character to want to get up on stage in the first place and this trait has to be satisfied."

"Obviously financial success is important. It brings security. I mean it may all sound rather sad," he smiled, "but you don't have many friends and being in a group is rather an insecure existence."

"But at the moment we are all very happy and most importantly we have faith in Wishbone Ash."



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WHO'S WHERE

ONE NIGHTERS

Week beginning Friday, February 26
FREE: Sheffield Oval (28); Newcastle City Hall (27); Bradford St George's Hall (28); Wolverhampton Civic Hall (1); Bournemouth Winter Gardens (2).

EQUALS: Aberystwyth University (26); Norwich Melody Rooms (27).

LEON RUSSELL: Newcastle City Hall (26); Sheffield University (27); Croydon Greyhound (28); Leicester De Montfort (1); Portsmouth Guildhall (2).

CURVED AIR: York University (26); Nelson Imperial (27); Blackburn Kings Hall (4).

JETHRO TULL: Kilburn State Theatre (26 & 28); Brighton Dome (3).

CHICKEN SHACK: Liverpool Univer-

sity (26); London Borough Polytechnic (27).

MOGUL THRASH: Exeter University (26); Country Club, Hampstead (28); Locarno, Leeds (4).

DEEP PURPLE: Brighton Big Apple (27).

QUINTESSANCE: Liverpool Philharmonic (27); London Lyceum (28).

JOHNNY MATHIS: London Palladium (28).

JACQUES LOUSSIER: Chatham Town Hall (27); Croydon Fairfield Hall (28).

ROLLING STONES: Newcastle City Hall (4).

EVERY WHICH WAY / AUDIENCE / JACKSON HEIGHTS: Manchester Free Trade Hall (26).

YES: Dagenham Roundhouse (27); Liverpool Stadium (4).

HOOKFOOT: Uxbridge, Brunel University (26); Bradford University (27); Portsmouth Tricorn (2).

STACKRIDGE: Exeter University (28); Hunter's Club, Braintree (28); Dunstable Civic (1); Buresque, Wisbech (2).

KINKS: Bristol Colston Hall (28); Birmingham University (1).

JOHN MAYALL: Birmingham Town Hall (3).

WHO: Young Vic, London (1).

CABARET
For three weeks beginning Monday, March 1

ANITA O'DAY/STAN GETZ: London's Ronnie Scott's.
For one week beginning Monday, March 1

MIXTURES: Birmingham Cavendish.